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Parent Focus

October 2005

State Schools for Severely Handicapped

Adapted Tricycles

by Janelle Burch, Supervisor for Instruction and Stephanie Brooks, Central Office

Adapted tricycles (three wheeled bicycles) are being used for instruction in many of the State School locations. If your child is using a tricycle at school and enjoys the activity, you might want to consider obtaining a tricycle to use at home, especially if you have a large yard or access to a park or biking trail.

The benefits of riding a tricycle for our students are many, including:

- Learning an appropriate leisure skill and participating in family outings
- Achieving better balance
- Developing attending and focusing skills
- Improving performance of gross motor skills
- Increasing muscle strength
- Learning motor planning as the student maneuvers the tricycle around obstacles
- Obtaining significant levels of sensory feedback and a decrease in self-stimulating behavior as the student keeps his hands on the handlebars
- Increasing confidence and self esteem as the student experiences a new freedom and becomes more independent in all of the skills involved.

The classroom or physical education teacher can advise you on the model being used at school and any adaptations your child uses, such as back or trunk supports, modified handlebars or pedal straps. Knowing your child's progress and prognosis with the current equipment will help you decide whether to purchase a similar model, or to wait if your child is almost ready to graduate to a different model, such as replacing a walking motion tricycle with a circular pedaling model. Some students can eventually move from an adapted pedaling model to a regular three-wheeled bicycle.

Different sizes are available from toddler to adult, and a variety of accessories and supports allow for customizing these tricycles to be used by almost any person.

- Some models offer a guide bar to encourage new riders. This enables the instructor to guide and pull while the child learns movement and balance.
- There are models available that use the regular rotary motion and models that use a back and forth walking type of motion.
- Some tricycles are hand-powered for those who cannot pump foot pedals.
- Tandem bikes and tricycles are available to help visually impaired riders benefit from this exercise, when riding with a sighted person.
- Many models are made to fold and can fit into the trunk of a car.

The majority of these tricycles cost between \$900 and \$1,600. Additional costs will be incurred depending on accessories and supports that are chosen to provide the most appropriate fit for the student.

Resources

Tricycles — You can obtain catalogs from these vendors or search their Web sites for "tricycles."

- **FlagHouse Special Populations**, 601 FlagHouse Drive, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604-3116. Call toll-free 1-800-793-7900 or visit their Web site at www.FlagHouse.com.
- **Rifton Equipment**, 359 Gibson Hill Road, Chester, NY 10918-2321. Call toll-free 1-800-777-4244 or visit their Web site at www.rifton.com.
- **Sammons Preston Rolyan**, P.O. Box 5071, Bolingbrook, IL 60440-5071. Call toll-free 1-800-323-5547 or visit their Web site at www.sammonsprestonrolyan.com.
- **The Bike Rack**, 2930 Campton Hills Road, St. Charles, IL 60175. Call toll-free 1-800-711-2453 or visit their Web site at www.thebikerack.com. Look under "Creative Mobility."

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Parent Focus

October 2005

State Schools for
Severely Handicapped
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480
Gary Schroer, Superintendent



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator, Jefferson State Office Building, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson St., P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone 573-751-4581.

Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by State Schools for Severely Handicapped for any specific product, organization or philosophy.

Funding — While there is no guarantee that funding will be provided, the following sources have funded therapeutic/adapted tricycles in the past. You could also contact the school's home school coordinator or your child's case manager for local organizations that may be able to fund all or part of a tricycle.

- **First Hand Foundation**, 2800 Rockcreek Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64117-2551. Telephone 1-816-221-1024 or visit their Web site at www.firsthandfoundation.org. Funding available to age of 20. There must be no other alternative method of funding and the foundation must approve the tricycle before it is purchased.
- **The Dream Factory of Greater Kansas City, Inc.**, P.O. Box 26426, Shawnee Mission, KS 66225-6426. Telephone 1-913-905-2900 or visit their Web site at www.kcdream.org. Funding available for ages 3 to 18. The child cannot have had a wish granted by any other organization. Purchasing a tricycle must be the child's wish, not that of the parents or other support person.
- **Kids Assistive Technology Program**, Missouri Assistive Technology Project, 4731 South Cochise, Suite 114, Independence, MO 64055-6975. Call toll-free 1-800-647-8557 or visit their Web site at www.at.mo.gov. Funding available to age 21. Family income must be below \$60,000 per year. Contact the phone number to obtain more details and an application form.

NEW! Cycles Available in the Greater St. Louis area

The Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis has placed hand cycles, three-wheel cycles, tandems and wheelchair/cycle combinations at the Katy Trail Rentals, Defiance and at ShowMe Aquatics and Fitness Center, 1500 South Fifth Street, St. Charles. Call the Recreation Council at (314) 726-6044 for details on how you can access these cycles. ■

Wheelchair Information

*by Alesia Cozart, Home School Coordinator and
Tammie De Los Santos, former Home School Coordinator*

Wheelchair Replacements

At some point in time your son or daughter may need a new wheelchair. What are the rules regarding wheelchair replacement if you have Medicaid insurance? If your son or daughter is a Medicaid or MC+ client, you may be able to receive a new wheelchair if it is "medically justifiable." Typically, this means your child might receive a new wheelchair every 3-5 years if no significant change occurs in his/her size, medical condition, or physical ability. However, if there is a significant change or need in any of these areas, your child would be eligible for a new chair even if the average time frame has not elapsed. If you have questions or concerns about your child's wheelchair coverage benefit, you may contact a recipient services representative in the Medicaid office at 1-800-392-2161.

If your son or daughter does not receive Medicaid and you are in need of assistance to help cover the costs of the wheelchair, there are some organizations that may be able to help. The first step would be to talk with your Regional Center Service Coordinator to see if there are funds available through their resources and contacts. Other organizations that can provide help include:

- The Variety Club offers assistance to families that have a child with developmental disabilities. Contact Variety of St. Louis, 2200 Westport Plaza Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146. Telephone 1-314-453-0453 or visit their Web site at www.varietystl.org; or Variety of Greater Kansas City, 17 Anchor Drive, Lake Tapawingo, MO 64015-9650. Telephone 1-816-220-2068 or visit their Web site at www.varietykc.org.
- Local councils of the Knights of Columbus. They raise money to assist those with disabilities. You can locate your local council by using the national Web site at www.kofc.org.

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State Schools for Severely Handicapped “Beliefs”

1. *All children can learn.*
2. *All learning can be measured.*
3. *Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.*
4. *Educators have the ability to influence community attitudes regarding people with disabilities.*
5. *All skills, teaching materials and instructional settings must be consistent with the student's chronological age and functional to the person outside of the school setting.*
6. *Everyone has something to communicate.*
7. *All behavior serves a purpose.*
8. *A person is more than his or her disability.*
9. *Parents and educators play a critical role in the lives of children.*

- Adapt-Ability in St. Louis County works with families to find funds that would pay for necessary equipment, such as a wheelchair. Adapt-Ability, Inc., 9355 Dielman Industrial Drive, St. Louis, MO 63132. Telephone 1-314-432-1101 or visit their Web site at www.adapt-ability.org.
- Missouri Assistive Technology department has a Durable Medical Equipment Recycling Program that provides recycled walkers, crutches, canes, commodes, shower chairs, manual and power wheelchairs, positioning equipment and miscellaneous wheelchair parts. Small fees are charged to individuals with disabilities based on their ability to pay. Contact Elaine Houtman at the Coalition for Independence Assistive Technology Center at 1-800-201-3826. This center also accepts donations of equipment.

Although this process can be very tedious and time-consuming, it is necessary for your child to have a wheelchair that is specifically designed for his or her needs. If your school has a home school coordinator, he or she can assist you in locating the resources that will enable you to contact the right individuals.

Wheelchair Repairs

Most wheelchairs are repaired by the vendor or agency from which the wheelchair was ordered. Parents or guardians should contact the vendor or agency repair department by telephone to schedule wheelchair repairs. Most wheelchair repairs are covered by straight Medicaid; however, if a student is enrolled in the MC+ program, there are more restrictions. For example, a student enrolled in MC+ must have prior approval from the MC+ program for parts and labor before the wheelchair can be repaired. The vendor or agency should be able to explain to you what repairs will be covered and any procedures you must follow. In some of our school locations, the home school coordinators can arrange for the vendor to visit the school and complete simple repairs.

For students under 21, Medicaid does not have a limit on minor wheelchair repairs such as missing screws or parts that need adjusting. Medicaid replaces a battery once yearly for electric wheelchairs, and replaces tires on electric or manual wheelchairs every six months. Medicaid monitors the parts ordered for wheelchair repairs every six months. Wheelchair parts and labor that exceed \$500 must have a physician's approval. Parent signatures are needed prior to repairs. A person with a wheelchair that requires many repairs in one year will be recommended for a new wheelchair evaluation.

For individuals over 21, Medicaid is still providing wheelchairs, but will no longer assist with batteries, accessories or repairs. Parents should be aware that Medicaid will only pay for the frame of the wheelchair. All other items on the wheelchair, such as the headrest, the seating, armrests, footrests, brakes and tires are considered accessories and are not reimbursed for anyone over 21. Any individuals qualifying for Medicare benefits or residing in a nursing home will retain their benefits for wheelchairs, repairs and accessories. Again, your wheelchair vendor should know the latest Medicaid rules and be able to explain current coverage to you.

At this time, full Medicaid coverage has been retained for all blind recipients regardless of age. If this is applicable to your child, you should notify the Medicaid office, so that your child will be eligible for the wheelchair replacements, repairs and accessories when he or she is an adult.

Wheelchair Loans

Since wheelchairs are intended to be fitted for the exact needs of the user, it is preferable to obtain a new wheelchair designed specifically for the person. However, occasionally emergencies arise and a loaner wheelchair is needed before a new wheelchair can be delivered. Medicaid only supplies loaner wheelchairs in extreme emergency situations, and on a case-by-case basis. Many of the independent living centers in Missouri have a 60-day loan program which may include borrowing a wheelchair. ■

Teaching Student Independence

by Karen Wells, Supervisor for Instruction

Calendar of Events

MPACT Training for Parents

- November 7, 2005
(9 a.m.-Noon or 6-9 p.m.)
"Disagreement Resolution Processes"
St. Louis Special School District, 12110 Clayton, St. Louis, Missouri
- November 14, 2005
(9 a.m.-Noon or 6-9 p.m.)
"Positive Behavior Interventions"
St. Louis Special School District, 12110 Clayton, St. Louis, Missouri
- November 19, 2005
(10 a.m.-4 p.m.)
"IDEA Boot Camp" Special education law, understanding the IEP process and disagreement resolution processes.
Ray Co. Health Department, 820 E. Lexington, Richmond, Missouri
- November 21, 2005
(6-8:15 p.m.)
"Positive Behavior Interventions"
Nonprofit Development Ctr., 425 Spencer Road, St. Peters, Missouri
- November 29, 2005
(6-8:15 p.m.)
"Building a Bridge to the Future" Transition planning for parents and students.
Windsor Branch Library, 7479 Metropolitan Blvd., Barnhart, Missouri

For more information call toll-free 1-800-743-734 or visit their Web site at www.ptimpact.com.

Chips, candy, pop, sandwiches, stamps, toys, soap . . . These and many other items are available in vending machines. Vending machines are everywhere: workplaces, grocery stores, gas stations, hospitals, schools, rest stops, laundries – to name a few! So learning to use a vending machine is a useful skill for our students. Although many students are taught this skill in the school and community settings by school staff, it is equally important for students to receive instruction and practice in the community setting with their parents.

Your child's classroom teacher is the best resource for finding out how many skills your son or daughter already knows for using a vending machine and, also, what approach the school is using in teaching this skill. The teacher may share with you the specific steps being taught, methods used and any adaptations needed. This will help you to teach your child in a similar way and avoid giving different instructions.

Alternative Methods for Teaching Skills

Forward chaining

The first step is taught before proceeding to the next step. Each step is learned in progression. The child is taught the first step, then the other steps are completed by the parent, until the first step is learned. Once the first step is learned, then the second step is taught, and so on.

Backward chaining

All the steps up to the last step are completed by the instructor/parent. Your assistance begins with the last step, with the child being directed to watch and/or complete all the other steps with needed assistance. Once the last step is learned, then the previous step is taught, and so on.

Total sequence

All the steps are taught in order. This method is used when your child is close to mastering the skill. One step of the skill becomes a natural cue for the next step.

Expanding on learned steps

If your child knows one or more steps in the middle of the sequence, then let him perform known steps as independently as possible until he is about to make a mistake. Then help your child to be successful on the next step by giving appropriate assistance. Focus your help on the steps that comes before or after what your child already knows.

Branching

If your child seems stuck on one step, you may need to break that step down into several smaller stages. These would be taught until your child has mastered the entire step. The classroom teacher can help you with different approaches to teaching a step that appears difficult for your child.

The following list of steps is helpful for teaching how to use a vending machine. Under each step there are some common methods and/or adaptations which can be used in teaching this skill and you should select the one that seems most relevant to your child's abilities. You may also be able to think of other adaptations appropriate for your child. When starting on this skill, you should begin with vending machines that offer clear and simple choices: select a soda machine with the same price for each drink, instead of a chip and candy machine with many more choices at varying prices.

1. Look at the items in the vending machine:
 - Direct the child to look at each item.
 - Parent or child names each item, pointing to each item as it is named.
 - If the child has a communication book/device/photos of items to be purchased from the vending machine, name and/or point out the available and appropriate items.

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Let's Have Some Fun!

*Ideas contributed by home
school coordinators.*

As our students become teenagers and young adults, it is healthy for them to enjoy age-appropriate sports or leisure activities with their peers in safe, welcoming environments.

We asked our home school coordinators to share some of the locations they have found that offer a variety of activities for our students and graduates. In addition to the list on page 6, you may find opportunities offered by local dance studios, art programs, libraries, parks and recreation centers, YMCAs and organizations such as the Elks Lodge or the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

If you know of other groups, please send in details of the activities offered, with the organization's name and contact information, or drop off the details at school and ask to have it forwarded to Stephanie Brooks in Central Office. We will share them in a future issue of *Parent Focus*.

If you do not have activities in your area where your son or daughter can participate, you could join together with other parents and see if a local agency, parks and recreation, or a support group would help organize the type of activities that interest your children.

(Continued on page 6)

2. Select the item to be purchased:
 - Child chooses the desired/needed item(s) by using the mode of communication appropriate for the child:
 - eye gaze
 - pointing
 - signing
 - verbalization
 - responding to yes/no questions regarding the choices.
3. Determine the amount needed to purchase the item:
 - Locate the amount needed on the machine.
 - Parent/child points to and verbally provides the amount needed to purchase the desired item.
4. Ready the money to be used to purchase the item:
 - Count out needed amount of money – dependent upon the child's skill level, use one or more of the following methods:
 - child is provided the needed amount by the parent
 - money cue card is provided so the child can match up the needed coins to the cue card (card shows pictures of two quarters, a dime and a nickel for 65 cents)
 - child can count the number of needed coins (ex. 5 dimes or 3 quarters)
 - child can count out the needed amount of money with/without the parent's assistance
 - child uses a bill (example: \$1, \$5 or \$10) and knows there will be change.
5. Put money in correct slot in machine:
 - Locate the money slot appropriate for the type of money provided/counted:
 - coin slot for coins and dollar slot for dollar bills.
 - Parent/child puts coins or dollar bill in correct slot – assistance is provided, as needed:
 - hand-over-hand
 - pointing
 - holding the coins as the child puts one in at a time.
6. Push the correct button(s) to purchase the desired item:
 - Parent/child pushes the correct button(s) to purchase the selected item(s):
 - point to the desired/needed button
 - block off items above and below the desired/needed button with hands or paper
 - child independently selects the desired/needed item.
7. Get item out of machine:
 - Child is directed to listen for the item to drop.
 - Locate the area of the machine with the dropped/selected item.
 - Parent/child pushes on or opens the door to the area to get the item – provide assistance to the child, if needed – make sure child is aware that the door needs to be pushed/held open while item is being retrieved.
8. Get change from machine, if change is due:
 - Locate the area of the machine where the change is to drop.
 - Parent/child gets change out of area – provide assistance to the child, if needed.
 - Child/parent counts out the change, as appropriate.
 - Put change away in pocket/wallet/purse.
9. Enjoy or use the item!

The object of this instruction is that your child will be successful in getting a chosen item from a vending machine, either entirely independently or being able to complete the majority of the steps independently. Your child may always use an adaptation to help with independence: if your child is unable to match or count money by himself, the solution may be to use a one-dollar bill for each purchase from a vending machine and teach your child to collect the change. Your child may always use a small picture schedule or prompt sheet to remind him what to do next. In the end, the most important outcome is allowing your child to be independent. ■

Location	Organization	Activities
Cape Girardeau	Special Therapeutic Activities in Recreation (STAR) Parks and Recreation (573) 334-2859	Community therapeutic recreation programs, call for schedule. Activities are free.
Dexter	Stoddard County ARC Dexter, Missouri (573) 624-8525	Families and students are welcome to concerts, bingo, dances and outings (such as St. Louis for Cardinal's games). Events are usually free; optional \$10 annual membership fee.
Jefferson City	Park and Recreation and Cole County Residential Services Mike Bollinger (573) 634-6482	Friday Night Recreation Program (15-years-old or older living in Cole County.) Year long program. Initial fee of \$10; small fee for some activities.
Joplin	Community Support Services GOALS 2312 Annie Baxter Joplin, Missouri (417) 624-7954	Activities for developmentally disabled 18-years-old or older living in Jasper County. Each month participants can meet weekly after work, join friends to see movies or dine out in the community twice a month. Other activities include bowling, exercising to music, crafts, cooking, dances, karaoke, fishing and trips to Kansas City. There are fees for all activities and some transportation is provided.
Kansas City	EFFECT – (816) 537-5951 Roeland Park Community Center Roeland Park, Kansas KEEN Programs Gregg Klice Community Center (816) 460-2583 www.keenkansascity.org	Party with dancing, karaoke and table games on the fourth Friday each month from 6:30-9:30 p.m. There is an entrance fee of \$5. Family and friends welcome. Held third Sunday of each month from 1:45-3:15 p.m. Athletics using basketballs, jump ropes, parachutes, scooters and more. Each child has volunteer coach. Child must be enrolled in program (there is a waiting list.)
Mapaville and surrounding locations	Developmental Services of Jefferson County – Leisure Services (636) 937-1701 or 931-4222 Debbie Neavill or Terri Dallas	Wide variety of activities for developmentally disabled: dances, movies, dining in community, bowling, sports teams, day trips to St. Louis and vacations (example: Michigan). Fees vary by activity. Transportation service available. Monthly newsletter of upcoming events. Participants are supervised by group leaders – parents can join the first activity to become comfortable with leaving child in future.
Rolla	Phelps County Recreation for the Handicapped Cindy Thesing (573) 364-9651	Year long program for individuals 16-years-old or older living in Phelps County. Free. Some transportation available. Arts, crafts, day and social activities.
Springfield	Champion Athletes Springfield, Missouri Susan Miles, Director (417) 890-1599	Contact Susan to obtain a flyer with upcoming activities. These are sports related and include swimming, track and field, bowling, softball, Bocce, golf, ice skating, soccer, gymnastics and social evenings.
St. Charles	Family Support Services 1000 Fairgrounds Road, #105 St. Charles, Missouri (636) 949-2546 Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis – St. Charles Co. Office 425 Spencer Road St. Peters, Missouri (636) 447-7704	Serves individuals between 10 and 21 years of age living in St. Charles County only. Offers after-school programs, school break camp programs, Saturday leisure activities, overnight camping trips. Charges vary by the activity – there is an hourly rate for all after-school and day programs. Information and referrals to activities for developmentally disabled. Provides some scholarships to recreational programs and camps.
St. Louis	Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis (314) 726-6044 www.stlouis.missouri.org/reccouncil Let's Play to Grow 1428 Chouteau St. Louis, Missouri Clarice Woodard (314) 231-3408	Call them for referrals to the many groups in and around St. Louis offering recreation activities to individuals with developmental disabilities. They distribute a quarterly newsletter and will e-mail you with information on upcoming events. Leisure and recreational activities: monthly dances, seasonal events, picnics for families, Six Flags trips. Minimal charge for dances, which can be waived. Annual Six Flags trip is open to parents and siblings free. Free transportation provided for students and families to events.

Special Smiles

by Coach Stan Smith,
Parkview State School



Resources

★ If you would like to get involved with the Special Olympics of Missouri, phone 1-800-846-2682 or visit their Web site at www.somo.org.

★ Talk with someone who is already working as a volunteer coach.

Hey, take a moment and imagine that you have the power to bring a smile to the face of another person. Yea! That's it! That's what I'm talking about. That's what keeps us coming back year after year, the power to bring a smile to some very special people.

Hi, I'm a volunteer coach for Special Olympics and I would like to take a few moments of your time to share some information about an organization that is in the smile-making business.

Special Olympics of Missouri (SOMO) is one chapter serving about 13,000 smiles of the 1.4 million smiles in 150 countries around the world. Smiles are not the only thing that show up. There is the laughter, singing, card playing, miles driven and many other things we haven't time to mention. However, I must say it is the smiles and laughter that last. Now, before I get to reminiscing too much, I'll give you a short overview of SOMO.

Some History ★ Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968. The first competition was held at Chicago's Soldier Field in July 1968 with 1,000 athletes from 26 states and Canada. During 1970, the first Missouri competition was held in Marshall. In 1971, Missouri became an incorporated unit of Special Olympics International.

The Mission ★ The mission is to provide year-round training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with mental or developmental disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in sharing gifts, skills and friendship with families, other Special Olympic athletes and the community.

Who's Eligible ★ Anyone with a mental or developmental disability who is at least 8-years-old may participate in Special Olympics competition. Children who are at least 6-years-old may participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training or cultural and social events offered by an accredited program, but they must wait until they are 8-years-old to compete. Training and competition opportunities are available for every athlete, regardless of ability level.

Competition ★ There are 19 sports offered by SOMO, including track and field, bowling, soccer, basketball, softball and swimming. New sports are being added all the time. Gender, age, and sports skill test scores arrange the competition. There are multiple levels of skill competition in many sports ranging from individual skills to team skills to game competition. An allowance is made for low motor skill success. Opportunities are available to compete at the area and state levels.

Opportunity ★ People can get involved with SOMO in many different capacities: as an athlete, family member, volunteer coach, fundraiser or game official. Also, others focus on public relations, outreach, games management or transportation.

What do you do with this information? Well, you could use it to start yourself or someone else on his/her way to a whole lot of smiles. Those smiles make it all worthwhile. ■

Donated Dental Services

by Nancy Simpson, Home
School Coordinator

In light of the recent Medicaid cutbacks in dental services for adults, you may be interested in the Donated Dental Services (DDS) program if one of your adult children (over 18) needs extensive dental work, is not covered under dental insurance, and you have no other means of paying for the work. This program also extends to individuals (children and adults) with Medicaid coverage who have looked and are unable to find a dentist who will accept Medicaid.

The program covers individuals with a permanent and severe disability, chronic illness, or the elderly. After checking that the patient is eligible for the program, a coordinator will put the person or family in touch with a dentist who has agreed to donate services.

Common procedures covered include root canals and crowns, extractions and the fitting of partial and full dentures. This service does not cover standard preventative dental work, such as cleanings. Individuals are allowed to receive services through DDS only once.

The National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped sponsors DDS, which has been in operation since 1986. Missouri falls under the National DDS program.

You can obtain an application by contacting Margaret Belowsky, 1800 15th Street, #100, Denver, CO 80202. Toll-free telephone: 1-888-426-7379. Further details about DDS can be found on their Web site at www.nfdh.org/DDS. ■

PARENT RESOURCES

REACH

by Becky Brozovich, Home School Coordinator

REACH for Kids presents the Ninth Annual Mid-America Conference on Children with Special Healthcare Needs – Friday, November 4, 2005 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The University Center at University of Missouri-KC – Cost: \$35 for one parent; \$60 for a couple; \$100 for professionals. Full and partial scholarships are available for parents.

This is a helpful conference for parents, other caregivers and family members, healthcare professionals, social workers and therapists. For more information or to register, call (816) 931-8687.

REACH for Kids (Rights, Education and Assistance to Cover Health for Kids) is a non-profit agency serving parents of a child with a disability that lives in the greater Kansas City area. This includes the counties of Jackson, Platte and Clay and serves most of the students attending the State Schools in the Kansas City area: B.W. Sheperd, Lakeview Woods, Trails West and Maple Valley. Their staff indicated they would attempt to provide informational assistance to families living outside this area.

The Goals of REACH for Kids

1. Ensure that children with special needs (with diagnosed medical or psychiatric disorders, or other chronic illnesses) have access to healthcare services which are vital to the quality of life for these children and their families.
2. Assist families in understanding their child's health care benefits, since these services and medical plans are often complex and difficult to navigate.
3. Help families and those who care for children with special needs to advocate for disabled children within the healthcare system.

The Services provided by REACH for Kids

1. **One-on-One Case Management** • A case manager is assigned to each family in need. The manager helps explain benefit coverages and assists families in obtaining services and needed equipment through their insurance company. If a service or equipment item is rejected for lack of coverage under the insurance plan, REACH staff will advocate for the family.
2. **Education** • A yearly conference is sponsored for families and professionals working with special needs children.
3. **Family and Professional Networking**
4. **Resources** • REACH for Kids has a Web site for families and professionals at www.reachforkids.org.

Contact REACH for Kids at One West Armour Boulevard, Suite 301, Kansas City, MO 64111. Telephone: 1-816-931-8687. ■

Partners in Policymaking 2006 Training Program

**Application deadline:
December 5, 2005**

Parents of students ages eight and under who have developmental disabilities are invited to apply to participate in the next *Partners in Policymaking* class. This program is sponsored by the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities and provides leadership training designed for parents of young children and self advocates.

Parents who are selected must attend eight two-day training programs which run monthly from February to September 2006. Seven of the weekends are located in St. Louis and one in Jefferson City. The Council will pay for lodging and meals and reimburse participants for travel. Depending on individual need, respite and attendant care may also be reimbursed. In addition to attending the meetings, participants must agree to complete all homework assignments and complete one major project.

The application form can be downloaded from their Web site at www.mpcdd.com or contact Vicky Davidson, Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, P.O. Box 687, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102. Telephone (573) 751-8611 or call toll-free 1-800-500-7878. ■

STATE SCHOOLS FOR SEVERELY HANDICAPPED
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Web site: dese.mo.gov/divspced/stateschools/

NOTE: If you have items of interest for the *Parent Focus*, please call 573-751-0706 (Missouri Relay 800-735-2966) or forward them to: Stephanie Brooks, State Schools for Severely Handicapped, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0480. E-mail: Stephanie.Brooks@dese.mo.gov